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ABSTRACT

In Nevada a book was developed to bring history to life for adult students who are beginning to discover the joy of reading and to let new readers and tutors tell their own stories about reading. The first part of the book includes 10 original stories written by Phillip Earl, a popular author and newspaper columnist. Articles were selected for high interest value and adaptability for adults able to read at a sixth grade level or above. The second part of the book includes six personal stories about reading submitted by new readers and their tutors. (MG)

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STORIES AND MORE

NEVADA HISTORY FOR NEW READERS

VOLUME II
Reading Level 9 to 13

Compiled by

Nevada Literacy Coalition
Nevada State Library and Archives

Funding provided by

Gannett Foundation
Nevada Humanities Committee

1989

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PREFACE

Literacy tutors everywhere are constantly in search of stimulating stories and articles suitable for Adult New Readers. In Nevada imaginative creators of programs struck upon an idea to bring history to life for students who are beginning to discover the joy of reading and to let new readers and tutors tell their own stories about reading.

Phillip Earl is the Curator of History for the Nevada Historical Society. He is an extremely popular author who writes a column called "This Was Nevada" for newspapers across the state. For Part 1 of this book, Phil enthusiastically agreed to open his rich store of articles to the Lahontan Valley Literacy Volunteers in Fallon. The original stories were edited through a grant to LVLV from the Nevada Humanities Committee. Articles were selected for high interest value and adaptability for adults able to read at a 6th grade level or above. The goal was to retain as much of the author's entertaining style and flavor as possible.

Reading Phil Earl's stories is like being present at an adventure. Not only will new readers experience the pleasure of reading these true stories about the past, but they can also visit the sites where the tales took place.

For Part 2 of this book, new readers and tutors from all of Nevada submitted their personal stories about reading to be shared with others. We are very grateful for their willingness to help.

This publication is supported by a "Bonus Grant" from the Gannett Foundation to the Nevada Literacy Coalition to publish much needed materials for literacy training. Gannett Foundation's "The Literacy Challenge" resulted in an array of products and publications with universal appeal.

Bonnie Buckley
November 1989

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Nevada Literacy Coalition gratefully acknowledges the support of the Gannett Foundation in strengthening the literacy movement in Nevada. The NLC came into existence in May 1987 in response to Gannett's "The Literacy Challenge" and was funded into a second year of successful programming. Award of the "Bonus Grant" for this publication now makes it possible to share the "fruit of our labor" with literacy programs everywhere.

The NLC thanks author/historian Phillip Earl for granting permission to publish his delightful articles under the title *Stories and More*. The entertaining stories will serve both to educate new adult readers and motivate them to read for sheer enjoyment.

The NLC recognizes the important role of Shirley Huzarski, the Nevada literacy volunteer who edited Phil's stories through a grant from The Nevada Humanities Committee. The NLC appreciates the increasing interest of The Nevada Humanities Committee in developing quality programs for adult literacy students. Thanks are also due to Elaine Fuller, Director of the Reading Information and Referral Center, and Tammy Bender for determining the reading level of the stories via the Frye Readability Formula.

The wonderful illustrations in this manuscript, by Paul Nyeland, were originally published in *Pioneer Nevada* Volumes 1 and 2. They are reprinted here courtesy of Harolds Club of Reno.

This manuscript was prepared for publication by Ramona Reno, Management Assistant for the Nevada Literacy Coalition at the Nevada State Library and Archives.

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The Humboldt River Sea Serpent

Fisherman are known for tall tales, but the following report, from the Elko Free Press of July 12, 1911, beats anything that has ever been brought home. It has been edited and reprinted here:

"While fishing on the Humboldt River a few miles east of Elko a few days ago, G.P. Griffith and Alex Hay had an experience that is still haunting them in their sleep. Both are honest men and not given to "seeing things," and their report is believed by their friends.

They left town early for an all day fishing trip. They went up the river to where the big dam backs up the water in the Fernald Field. Here, for several hundred yards, the stream is wide and quite deep. Mr. Griffith said he saw something coming down the stream, which he thought at first was a flock of wild ducks following one another in a long line. Being a sportsman, he was interested in the sight, so he stepped back into the bushes to watch, and called to his companion to look at the sight. But to their wonder and amazement, when the object got opposite them, it was a huge serpent. Its long, huge, black, and shining body was swimming on the surface of the water. The reptile seemed to be searching the banks on either side for prey with its head, or heads, held high.

Fascinated, they watched the huge snake, but as soon as one of them spoke, it disappeared. Mr. Griffith went for his gun, and Mr. Hay remained to watch for its reappearance. A few minutes later it again came to the surface. Mr. Hay declares it was at least thirty feet long with a tail like a fish and with four heads showing clearly. But when Mr. Griffith returned with the gun the serpent had gone and did not reappear again, although they waited and watched for a long time.

Since it was seen, quite a number of our fisherman have gone to that place, but no one had the good fortune to catch a glimpse of the monster."

---- P. Earl

1

Lore and Legend of the Branding Iron

Once upon a time, a long rope, a fast horse, and a hot iron could put a man into the cattle business. There was also a time when a short rope with a noose at the end could put him out of business. That this latter set of circumstances did not become more prevalent than it did is a tribute to the cattlemen themselves, the livestock associations, the courts, and the regularization of the system of using and registering brands.

Romantically, brands have been termed "The Cattlemen's Coat-of-Arms" and "The Heraldry of the Range." Really, they are nothing more than marks of identification and ownership placed upon a horse, a mule, or a cow. Branding is as old as civilization. In the United States, it is associated almost exclusively with the western cattle ranchers who gave to brands and branding the lore and romance which they have taken on.

Placing livestock under a brand is, figuratively, the same as placing it under lock and key. Changing a brand was a crime, but not a capital offense requiring/allowing hanging. Brands are the property of the owner and can be sold, assigned, and transferred, as well as mortgaged and liened. They can also be lost if not registered regularly with the State Brand Inspector.

A cattleman can adopt any brand design he chooses, and it can be recorded if it is not too similar to another already in use. Many designs are nothing more than the owner's initials or groups of letters which indicate the name of the ranch, but many show lively imagination and artistic talent. A few may have had their start with a bad dream or a long drunk. In any case, a man's brand represents pride of ownership and a demand for respect.

The most famous iron in branding lore was the "running iron" used by rustlers to alter brands on stolen horses or cattle. The iron differed from the ordinary branding iron in that it had no brand design at the end, only a small iron ring, or, more frequently, an end which turned up to form a tight hook. The name of the iron comes from its use --- running along an animal's hide like a hot buttonhook, drawing the outline of a new brand or changing an old one. Although rustlers gave the running iron a bad name, it was, and is, still preferred by some ranchers for certain work --- all legal, of course. When calves are gathered from the far corners of a range, branding is often done where the herd is collected, commonly called a "bunch ground." Here a running iron is useful. One cowhand often represents more than one owner at these roundups, and he will brand for each one with a running iron rather than carrying a number of heavy irons.

One old Nevada tale concerns a rancher whose brand was "IC." His wayward son once decided to rustle the beginnings of a herd for himself and began with his own father's stock. He then corralled a few head, heated up a running iron, and added one more letter. The brand then read "ICU." The old man caught on quickly and did a little fancy sketching himself. The next time the boy saw the cattle, they were walking around with the brand "ICU2."

Cutting the ears of cattle is another means of marking stock. These earmarks must be recorded with the State Brand Inspector along with the brand. These marks not only show ownership, but can be easily seen when rounding up cattle in high brush country. The hair will grow over a brand, or the brand might be covered by mud if the steer has been lying on its branded side at a spring. There are dozens of different patterns in use in Nevada --- slits, notches, punched holes, clips, etc. Tattooing is

sometimes used to mark cattle and horses today, and metal or phosphorescent ear tags for cattle are becoming more common.

Cattle were not the only critters on the range to be earmarked or branded. It also happened to rustlers who cut off the ears of stolen stock as well as altering the brands. When caught, rustlers sometimes had one or both of their own ears sliced off. Enraged stockmen were also known to brand a man with an "R" somewhere on his body, often in the center of the forehead. Small wonder that some men spent the rest of their lives with hats jammed down to their eyebrows or wore their hair flowing down their shoulders. When a man applied for a job on a ranch, the foreman checked for ears. If the man lacked one or both, he was closely questioned as to the reason. Thus, it was that men who had had an ear chewed off in a fight or lost one in an accident often carried a certified statement from a judge attesting to the circumstances. Such documents could be easily forged however, and a man without ears was someone to be watched at all times. Such was life in the West.

---- P. Earl

Ghosts and All That

Although ghosties and ghoulies and things that go bump in the night are not common in Nevada's history, the state has had enough weird apparitions and unexplained happenings in the past to raise the hair on anyone. Some observers on the Comstock Lode figured that all the mining activity somehow disturbed the eternal rest of those laid away in the cemeteries, but there were more reasonable explanations for many of the ghostly sightings.

The so-called "White Nun" who strolls the halls of the old St. Mary's Hospital in Virginia City died there under mysterious circumstances a century ago. It is said that the spirits of actors and actresses put on performances in the dead of the night at Piper's Opera House. The barroom of the old Ormsby House in Carson City was once believed to be haunted by the ghost of Hank Monk, the famous Sierra Nevada stage driver. Monk's last years on earth were spent sitting next to the stove at the bar in an old, broken down chair. After Monk's death in February of 1883, the barkeep began to notice that the chair was always next to the stove when he opened up in the morning, no matter where he had placed it the night before. Over the years, glowing white figures have been seen on the grounds of Bowers' Mansion in Washoe Valley, and stories still circulate of window shades found raised which had been pulled down when the occupants of the buildings left. Even one of the university's buildings, Lincoln Hall, has a ghost; that of James A. Champagne, a young engineering student who committed suicide there in February, 1906.

The railroads also have their ghost stories. At Monument Point, just over the line of the Southern Pacific in Utah, train crews used to see a filmy

creature waving a red light (the signal for danger), but they were unable to find anyone when the train came to a halt. A railroad fireman had lost his life in an accident at that place some years earlier. Apparently his spirit remained behind to warn his comrades. There was a similar case at Carlin when the ghost of a dead conductor was often seen in the railyards. He, too, had come to an untimely end in an accident. The Southern Pacific's Express Car No. 5 was also haunted. Wells Fargo agents working in the car sometimes reported meeting a ghost who continually asked "What was done with the corpse?" This could have referred to an 1881 event in which a body being shipped east for burial was lost or stolen from the car. The Nevada-California-Oregon Railroad had a haunted boarding car. A Chinese cook had been murdered in the car in February of 1889, and his ghost remained to haunt his successors. The railroad was unable to keep cooks and finally had to abandon the car.

Stories of the mining industry are full of ghost tales. Miners on the Comstock came to believe that a candle flickering towards a man meant that he was marked for death and should give up underground work. The ghosts of his departed comrades were believed to be responsible for these warnings. Ghosts were also known to give other signs --- terrible groans and terrifying shrieks to tell their living brothers that danger was near. Miners took these signs seriously and would often refuse to enter a mine where strange noises had been heard.

Out on the northern end of the Black Rock Desert, the ghost of James N. Sharp wanders to this day. He was beaten to death with an ax in April of 1875, and his ghost continues to seek vengeance. Joseph W. Rover, Sharp's partner, was convicted of the murder and hanged in Reno on February 10, 1878. In fact, the execution of Rover set loose another ghost on the land. Rover claimed that Frank J. McWorthy, another

partner, had done the deed. After the execution, Rover's ghost was seen by any number of Renoites. Eiley Bowers, a spiritualist herself, claimed to have had a conversation with him. The spirit had given her new evidence of Rover's innocence, she said. Some twenty years later, in July 1889, McWorthy made a deathbed confession to Sharp's murder.

The ghost of Jack Davis still guards his gold cache in Six Mile Canyon. The spiritual remains of Lee Singleton will walk Eureka County's Culver Canyon to the end of time. Singleton had murdered a fellow workman in 1871, and was later driven to suicide by the man's ghost. In Carson Valley, the citizens continue to live with the curse of Adam Uber, a man lynched in Genoa in December of 1897. Tragedies and misfortunes of all kinds came to dog the heels of those who did the lynching, and their descendants have never quite shaken the spell.

The dead and the damned thus walk the sagebrush and haunt this earthly realm --- accident victims, suicides, the unavenged innocent, the spirits of those trying to tell us something or to warn us of a fate similar to theirs. Perhaps we should listen more closely.

---- P. Earl

Sand Mountain: Dune of Mystery

Among the most interesting of Nevada's geographical features is Sand Mountain, a large dune of pure white sand located some twenty-five miles east of Fallon on Highway 50. The area has recently been in the news in connection with the excavation of a Pony Express station just to the south, but it was known to the immigrants of the 1840's and 1850's, and was often mentioned in their journals and diaries.

The Indians of the area also know of the mountain, and their ancestors had strong feelings about it. They believed the dune to be a living creature of some sort and avoided it when they traveled to the eastern mountains to gather pine nuts. This belief comes from the strange sounds which come from the dune during a windstorm. Some observers describe the sounds as not unlike rolling thunder, while others hear the roar of a distant jet or a repeated note on a bass violin. Standing ankle-deep in the sand, the sound vibrations can be felt as well as heard, and the dune is often referred to as "Singing Sand Mountain."

The sounds and the vibrations come from the stirring up of the grains of sand. Geologists claim that the dune is one of only three "singing dunes" in North America, the other two being Crescent Dune north of Tonopah and Kelso Dune in California's Mojave Desert. The origins of the dune were a mystery until geologists took an interest in recent years. According to them, the sand comes from Weber Reservoir some thirty-six miles to the south. For thousands of years the sand has been carried by the winds into Rawhide Flat, across the Blow Sand Mountains, through Simpson Pass, and along Four-Mile Flat to the Stillwater Range. The winds carry it over the mountains at that point, and a back- wind helps to pile up the sand.

Sand Mountain, according to recent calculations, is nearly 400 feet high, four miles long, and a mile in width. First surveyed in May of 1868, it was thought to be worthless for mining purposes. In the late 1880's, several men tried an amalgamation process on the sand in an attempt to extract the small gold values, but the operators went broke. Some years later, in September of 1909, the dune was again located as a gold claim by prospectors working for Reith, Craig & Co. of San Francisco. They figured that the dune had a gold value of $1.34 a ton and they planned to put up a cyanide mill at the site; but the project fell through. Another such operation in 1934 also came to nothing.

Among the many stories told of the mountain is one which concerns an Indian who climbed the dune and disappeared. He apparently fell down into the crater found at the very top and was simply swallowed up. Members of immigrant parties were probably the first whites to climb Sand Mountain, but the first recorded climb by women was that of Miss Blanch Ruff and Mrs. J.J. Williams in October of 1907.

On any weekend, the area is crowded with trail bikers and dune buggy drivers trying their skills at reaching the top of the dune. The mechanical contraptions leave their marks on the sand, but a good windstorm soon restores the dune. There have been changes in the plant and animal habitats, however, and few undisturbed areas remain today. At the present time, officials of the Nevada State Park System are considering the establishment of campground facilities in the area to open it for more general family use. Each weekend, more and more Nevadans are discovering the joys of this gigantic sand pile.

---- P. Earl

Pyramid Lake's Mysterious Giant

Somewhere back in time, long before the coming of the white man to the Great Basin, giants lived in this land. Indian stories say they were nine feet tall, red-headed, and cannibals. Sarah Winnemucca writes of a battle between these people and her own Paiute tribe along the Humboldt River, and there is a grave on the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation in which one of those giants is supposedly buried.

According to Paiute legends, a giant once came down from the north and killed hundreds of warriors by picking them up and knocking their heads together. Others were caught up by the heels and dashed to death on the rocks. Faced with destruction, the Paiute leaders decided upon a plan to get rid of the creature. On a certain day, a party of 300 men armed with bows and arrows hid themselves behind rocks in the Truckee Canyon to wait for their enemy. He was seen approaching with a long string of fish and a great number of rabbits slung over his shoulder on a rope. When he got within range, the concealed warriors stood up and each fired an arrow. The giant turned and ran out of the canyon, followed by the warriors, but he fell dead within a half mile. The men feasted upon the fish and rabbits and buried their victim where he fell.

No monument was ever erected to mark the final resting place of the giant, but the descendants of the warriors made a yearly trip to the grave for many years. Rocks would be piled up on the mound to keep the spirit of the creature from getting out, and the tracks made by the wounded giant were cleaned out and preserved. Food, beads, and trade goods were sometimes brought out to quiet the spirit. The Indians finally quit going to the grave, and the story was largely forgotten.

When this writer visited the place some years ago, he measured the mound as being roughly sixteen feet in length and four and one-half feet wide. The tracks supposedly made by the running giant measured from sixteen to eighteen feet apart. At that time, the writer was told that the giant was fifteen feet tall, with eyes as large as pony tracks and feet the size of a baby's cradleboard.

For reasons of promised secrecy, this writer will never tell the location of the grave, but something very big is buried there. What it is will remain a mystery so far as this writer is concerned.

---- P. Earl

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Marietta the Mineral Queen

Among the odd people who once lived in Virginia City was Marietta Ricketts, the so-called "Mineral Queen" of the Comstock Lode. Soon after she and her husband moved to Nevada in the spring of 1879, she fell ill and hardly knew a well day thereafter. Some days it was dizzy spells and headaches. Muscle cramps came at other times, and the poor lady also had eye problems, skin rashes, and nasal drainage. Her doctors were puzzled because every remedy they could devise proved useless. Mrs. Ricketts herself finally determined the cause of all her ills -- a peculiar sympathy with metallic ores of all kinds.

In traveling about the Comstock from Virginia City on the north down to Silver City and beyond, she experienced peculiar sensations when passing over bodies of ore deep underground. It could not have been mental because many of the mineralized areas had not yet been discovered or developed. She began experimenting and invented a device by which her strange powers were intensified. It consisted of two slender rods of hard rubber implanted in the lens casings of a pair of opera glasses. Across the top was a small leather covered bottle of quicksilver. In using it, she would draw her hands along the rods. The rods would then swing over along the line of a vein of ore and bend down from the middle. "It starts here," she would say. "Now it bears this way," and finally, "Here it ends."

Word of her strange talents soon reached the ears of a mining promoter. He contacted Mrs. Ricketts and her husband, and told them that he wanted to satisfy his curiosity in regards to her claims. He himself was well acquainted with all the mineral veins and ore deposits in the area. She agreed to travel the length and breadth of the lode one Sunday in

late July. Six Mile Canyon was also covered, and Mrs. Ricketts was right on target every time, even when efforts were made to mislead her.

Thoroughly impressed, the mining man invited her out to the Sierra Nevada Mine. As before, she was able to trace out every vein and helped make a very strange map. Instead of showing a body of ore lying lengthwise of the vein, her map traced an ore chimney some sixty feet wide at the crest which spread out to 270 feet as it went down. Her reckonings even showed where it narrowed and where it ended.

She described her feelings as an unpleasantness which turned to intense pain as the ore became richer, but which lessened as she entered upon non-mineralized ground. Strangely enough, she had no such trouble with the pots and pans in her own home, nor any trouble with iron lamp posts or metal-fronted buildings - - only underground ore bodies. Some of her friends believed that she was a spiritualist, but she knew nothing of that black art, although, she could do such parlor tricks as point out the location of gold or silver items hidden in a room.

Mrs. Ricketts had offers from various mining companies to come to work for them, but the experience was so painful, she turned them down. She and her husband finally found a house located on barren ground, and her physical problems soon cleared up. The couple remained on the Comstock for another year, moving back to California in the summer of 1880.

Whatever became of the strange lady is a secret not shared by history, but probably she spent the rest of her years as far away from mines and ore bodies as possible.

---- P. Earl

Sam Lockett's Mail-Order Bride Moves On

Single women, proper women, were rarely found in early-day Nevada. An eligible female was in great demand. Rich people had a hard time keeping servant girls, and rural school boards could not hang onto a teacher, even a plain, middle-aged widow. Some lonely men contracted with marriage brokers to find them a mate. Others joined lonely-hearts clubs or wrote to mail-order brides.

Born Grace Holland in Ohio, she was teaching school in Cincinnati when the urge to go West struck. In the fall of 1910, she contacted a lonely hearts club and was soon writing to Sam Lockett an Oasis Valley farmer in Nevada.

In his letters to the young lady, Lockett said he was a rich independent businessman, rancher, and miner. None of which was true. He did raise chickens in his front yard, and once in a while he did some prospecting. But he had not made his fortune. He had lied about his age and looks too. It was enough to convince Miss Holland to quit her teaching and come West. He sent her $70 for expenses and she sent him a wire that she would arrive in Rhyolite on January 18, 1911.

Sam was up early that morning --- clean-shaven with his hair slicked down, his boots shined and wearing his best store-bought suit. He drove to Rhyolite in his buggy and was at the Las Vegas & Tonopah depot when she stepped off the train. As he came up to her, he asked if she were Grace Holland. Her black eyes snapped as she looked him over, and she replied "no." "Now didn't you jest come from Ohio?" he asked. Another "no" was her answer. He then demanded to know what her name was but was told in no uncertain terms that it was none of his "confounded business."

The mysterious young lady then bought a ticket to Goldfield and had her bags put on the train. She left for the north a few minutes later, leaving her would-be mate wondering about romance and women.

The Rhyolite telegrapher had passed the story up the wires and men crowded the platforms at other stations to get a look at the visitor. Sam's friends had a good laugh over all this. Sam decided he had been robbed of his $70 and he wired Sheriff William A. Ingalls to have her arrested for getting money under false pretenses.

Sheriff Ingalls arrested her when she arrived. He then released her after hearing her side of the story. She got a room at the Esmeralda Hotel and had her meals in her room.

The next day Danny O'Keefe was introduced to her by Mrs. Dammis, the hotel proprietor. The two fell in love almost immediately and were married by Judge Arthur E. Barnes on January 26, 1911.

Sam Lockett had dropped the charges because he thought if he hadn't lied none of this would have happened. O'Keefe sent him the $70 the day after he and Grace were married.

Grace and Danny moved to Tonopah and had two children. Seven years later Danny died of the Great Spanish Flu Epidemic. Grace and the children moved to Goldfield for a short time, but finally moved back to Ohio.

---- P. Earl

Como Goes 100 Percent

In early-day Nevada, elections were grand affairs, and almost all the men voted. Parades for one party or the other had floats, men carrying torches and banners, brass bands, and fire companies. Nevada's excitement for the re-election of Abraham Lincoln in 1864 was endless. But the spirit shown in Como, a booming camp southeast of Virginia City across the Carson River, was notable even in those times.

At some point during the campaign, a Como miner made a public promise that "Uncle Abraham" would receive every one of the town's 200 votes. It soon became a matter of public pride that this should indeed be the case, and the promise was bragged about in Nevada and California. As it happened, one of the miners in Como became ill a few days before the election. When he got worse, a doctor was called. After examining the man, the doctor said that he had pneumonia and would probably die within a few hours.

The news upset the miners, but both they and their sick comrade were determined that Como should meet its promise. On Monday night, November 7, the day before the election, the miner's pulse weakened, and he turned a deathly white. His comrades fed him liquor and home cures, and he somehow lasted through the night. At dawn on Tuesday morning his lips turned blue, so his friends fanned him with newspapers.

The polls opened at 7:00 a.m. A stretcher was brought to the miner's cabin. By this time he was breathing heavily, rolling his eyes, and raving. He was again given whiskey, and he was able to say that he wanted to vote.

The stretcher bearers carried him down the canyon to the polling place. They put a ballot and a pencil in his hand and propped him up on a stool. Before he could make the sign of an X in the proper square, he fell forward and seemed to be dead. More whiskey was given and he came to enough to use the pencil. Just as he made his mark, he fell

backwards into the arms of a fellow miner who had been steadying his arm.

Those who were there that morning later claimed that the miner was dead when he marked the ballot, but others claimed that he was alive at the time, but died right afterwards. In any case, the honor of Como was saved, and the records forever after showed the camp as 100 percent loyal to Abe Lincoln and the Union. As for Nevada, it gave the President and his party a winning vote.

The people of Como gave the young miner a proper send-off two days later. Virginia City's brass band and army unit came to march in his funeral parade. All the people of Como turned out for the graveside service. Never before nor since has a voter been so honored.

---- P. Earl

17

A Nevada Boomer Goes to Heaven

Samuel Post Davis, long-time editor of the Carson Appeal, never achieved the worldwide fame of Mark Twain, but he was his equal in many ways. As a humorist, Davis used his newspaper to comment on the faults of his times, puncture inflated egos, and pan the passing scene. Among those of his fellow citizens who were once the object of his wit, were certain men who followed every mining rush so as to stake out claims and town lots in hopes of selling them to later-comers at a profit. Those who fell for such scams often found that the "boomers," as they were known, had only slight claims to the properties they sold. Many brawls, gunfights, and lawsuits followed. Davis found some humor in the practice, however, and wrote this story in August of 1908.

A Nevada man died and went to heaven. Saint Peter saw him coming. He had known the man to be a good, hard-working prospector, so he stood aside and allowed him to walk through the Pearly Gates without hindrance.

Once inside, the Nevada man stopped in astonishment. He was alone in the streets of heaven. While the angels and archangels were busy with their duties elsewhere, the Nevada man took one look at the streets paved with gold, jasper, and all manner of precious stones, and he got busy. From some place he dug up a pick and a shovel. In about half a day, he had a lot of claims staked out, monuments built in the street and alleys, even piling up gold bricks for his stakes. He exhausted the paper supply of half a dozen houses in writing out his location notices. He staked claim after claim and examined the gold pavements as he went along. Wherever he found a particularly fine-looking gold paving stone, he would dig it up and pile it with the others he had gathered. He soon

had enough for a shipment that would have made the Mohawk Leases look like thirty one-cent pieces.

About the time the third archangel stubbed his bare toe on the Nevada man's monument, there was a small-sized riot. The angels and archangels went to Saint Peter and protested about the way the Nevada man was disturbing things in heaven. From what they told him, Saint Peter concluded that the prospector was literally raising hell in heaven, so he sought him out.

"My good fellow," he asked, "what are you doing around here?"

The Nevada man told him and explained the great wealth strewn around in every direction.

Saint Peter took it all in. Then he leaned over the Nevada man's shoulder and whispered earnestly to him. The Nevada man looked doubtful, but Saint Peter said the information was straight. Shouldering his pick and shovel, the Nevada man started off on foot, passing through the Pearly Gates and out of sight.

The angels and archangels were exceedingly curious to know what Saint Peter had whispered. Saint Peter said that he merely told the man that a big strike had been made in hell and there was a chance to locate a good site. He knew that no Nevadan could withstand the temptation to lay out a town site whether the gold was better or not.

---- P. Earl

Nevada's Jails Held Anything But Prisoners

A very necessary building in most of early Nevada's mining camps and towns was the local jail. It was a mark of civic pride to point out to visitors an imposing structure complete with barred windows, steel doors, and special police guards on duty. In the larger towns, such as Virginia City and Reno, there were effective jails with their usual cargo of drunks, burglars, and the occasional murderer. But many jails never reached the grandeur of the leading communities. Many were nothing more than the back rooms of mercantile stores, or frame outbuildings with doors and windows bolted from the outside. Sheriff Sam Gay of Las Vegas kept his jail empty by handcuffing drunks and rowdies to hitching posts outside saloons. In Searchlight, prisoners were bound with chains to an extra large joshua tree until they could be delivered to the county seat at Pioche. Unusual jails were far more common than the well-built and well-tended public lock-ups.

When Winnumucca finally succeeded in getting the county seat away from Unionville after a series of political fights, a new courthouse was built of brick with back rooms designed for cells. Not much attention was paid to the design of the cells, and prisoners kept escaping. Records show that in one three-year period, some fifteen "owlhoots" shook the dust of Winnemucca's jail with little effort. The brick walls evidently stopped no one, since five different escapes were made by simply kicking a way through the wall. The mortar was not too good and alert jailbirds loosened bricks with their boots and then crawled out to freedom. One fellow carved a wooden key after watching the jailer unlock doors and used it to open his cell one evening. Another simply pried off the door and left the hinges for the sheriff. Most escapes were made by digging under the foundation. The sheriff got so tired of rebuilding the walls and floors, that he put thin coats of plaster over the

wall holes and rebuilt the floors. The more clever prisoners relocated the holes, kicked out the plaster or floorboards, and proceeded to freedom with little effort. Finally, Winnemucca formed a grand jury for investigating the jail conditions. They recommended that the county commission "line the jail with iron." While the meetings were going on, four more inmates sprung themselves from the hoosegow. The last blow to civic pride came when a young woman managed to break into the jail to visit her cattle-rustling boy friend.

If some jails were too easy to get out of, some others turned out to be too strong. In Paradise Valley, a stone-built jail almost cost the lives of all the prisoners when a fire started. The doors were covered with flame and smoke. Finally, when it was seen that the building was going to be a total loss, the deputy and residents used sledge hammers and crowbars to remove the barred windows so the prisoners could be saved from a fiery death. The deputy barely made it out in time; the roof collapsed just as the last prisoners were pulled through a small window.

Some towns didn't want a jail at all. Often in the early days other means would be used instead of a proper jail. In Tuscarora, a general store's powder cellar was used to hold prisoners until they could be taken to Elko and the courthouse. The town fathers wanted prisoners taken out of town as soon as possible to avoid the costs of boarding them. The sheriff was willing since he drew mileage from escorting prisoners. There are many instances of sheriffs taking prisoners to the county border and advising them to never return unless they wanted an immediate trial. The process was a good way of getting rid troublemakers and saving court costs to the county. Unless the crime was a particularly violent one, many prisoners were unloaded on neighboring counties where it was hoped that some public-minded citizen would either end their days with a sixshooter or send them to the state prison in Carson City.

The Carson facility was the final dumping ground for the county jails. Many lunatics, women, Orientals, and Indians were held there to avoid costs for the counties. It has been rumored that prisoners were held in Carson City for years as a favor to county sheriffs. A reading of letters from prisoners to the State Parole Board shows that many of the prisoners were not really sure of their crime or how long they were to stay in jail. Often the Parole Board acted to end a miscarriage of justice. Good or bad, life in frontier Nevada prisons was no lark.

---- P. Earl

What Learning to Read Means to Me

ONE

Reading is a new experience for me, I'm learning to read better every day. Reading to me means freedom within one's self. Learning to read gives me self confidence and helps me speak more clearly. Reading can turn bad times into good times. The more I learn about reading the more I want to know. Knowing when to push or pull on a door is nice to know. Learning to read helps me to express myself when I'm speaking, that to me is a joy. Reading can help me in so many ways, when I'm on the job, at the doctor's office and when I'm buying something important. Knowing how to make out my own checks gives me a good feeling when I'm paying my bills. These are just a few of the things that reading means to me.

I find reading books exciting because I learn new things. I believe in some way reading can take away boredom, when the mind is bored, so is the body. Reading can help make me become more of a whole person. I find after years of not knowing how to read that reading makes life much more exciting. Believe it or not, reading can make a sad person into a happy person. All things about reading are good. A person feeds their body food to have a healthy body. I think in a way, reading and learning is food for the mind. I know that an active minds helps give you a healthy body. Someday I would like to be able to read and understand the Bible. That is my goals.

TWO

I remember my first lesson. It was hard but I was ready to learn. I never knew I would finish the first lesson. I wanted to learn so much. I find myself sometimes getting tired and frustrated but I try not to waste my teachers time.

My teacher has a lot of patience teaching me. Looking back on those days, I never thought that I would ever get in my third book. I felt good about my self for the first time in a long time. I finally have confidence in my self. Mother has been writing to me for six years and I couldn't read her letters at all and last summer was the first time I was able to read them. Now I can talk about my reading problem. Now knowing that it was not my fault. I remember writing my Mother and Aunt and my teacher would help me comeet it. One day I would like to help others learn to read but for now I am still learning. Some day soon I will reach my goal.

THREE

There are several reasons that I want to learn to read. The first reason that I want to read is so that I can go back to school so that I can get a better job. I want to work in child care or do office work.

Another reason is that I want to be able to fill out applications. I would also like to be able to help shut-ins at convalescent homes by reading to them to help pass the time.

The main reason I want to be able to read is to help my son in school so that he can go to college when he is older. I would also like to be able to help other people to learn how to read because there are so many other people who need help.

FOUR

My first essay. I would like to thank the Laubach people and two special ladies that mean so much to me. My teachers Jewell Gay and Sharon Neubauer, for taking time and patience. I am being freed from the prison of illiteracy, where I have been for 40 years. I feel a sense of independence and self worth. I feel I can understand my family better. My job is easier. I can get along with my friends and I don't have to hide because of my illiteracy.

FIVE

When I was starting out as a painter, I was a kid; I was an apprentice, I guess you'd say. I'd have to open the cans of paint to find out if they were flat or enamel. I could tell by smell. I also had to take the lids off to find out the colors.

Learning to read has opened new doors and built up my self esteem. When I am around others I feel equal. Now I am making out checks, writing letters to my family and doing my own shopping.

You ask what learning to read means to me. The above story should let you know what drastic changes in my education did. To me, it's like being "born over again." In the near future my goal is to be a volunteer tutor at the library.

SIX

When I was a little girl I was in a few foster homes. But none of the foster homes helped me to read. I don't know how I passed through High School and I didn't learn how to read.

Now I need to read in order to have a better future. It opens up a lot of opportunities the more you learn how to read the better your future will be. And your future will be a lot better plus you will feel better about your self. At one time I didn't know how to read but I am learning more and more.

I can read stories in books to my children and teach them. My tutor has helped me so much and I am grateful. So if you are one of the people who doesn't know how to read it would be for your benefit to learn. Just think of your future.

I'm just glad I am going to school and I'm really looking forward to my future for my children and myself.

SEVEN

This is my story. When I came to the UNLV Reading Center, I was having a very hard time reading, writing, and spelling. Every time I would try to write, I would spell my words wrong, or my sentences were not punctuated right. My reading has also improved and its not boring to me anymore. I can do much better than before I started receiving tutoring. This class has helped me and made me a better person.

My life has changed in many ways. I can see the world differently. There are more opportunities and I'm not afraid to take chances anymore. This is also helping my career, as I can now read my lines in acting. I feel good about myself! I've gotten a lot of encouragement from my tutor. In the past two months, I've gotten a job and I will be going to the Clark County Community College in February. Now I can say that I am very happy and I would not give up my reading classes for anything.

EIGHT

I have a problem with reading and writing, but due to the help I am receiving from the reading program at UNLV I am learning to read better and my spelling is doing better. I would hope that many more programs like this will be of value in the future because our country has a demand for them. The literacy rate is not going down but is going up instead, and with these programs we might be able to get a grip on this problem. I would like to see more help in the grade schools with reading and writing so that the young people of this country will be better readers. They'll be able to provide for their families and country, and it will help students and teachers of the next generation.

NINE

To be able to read would mean I would be able to work in my business and help my children and be happy forever.

TEN

Reading is being part of the real world. The feeling of learning to read is like being on top of a mountain. It means to be able to enjoy reading to the fullest and to feel a part of it, to pick up anything and not have to say, "No, I can't read this, it's too hard for me." A most embarrassing time was when my niece, who was seven years old at the time, had me read a story to her. As I read, she corrected me. My wife said, "She reads better than you do." I felt like crawling into a hole.

Since I've been going to a special reading class, my reading has improved and I can enjoy it much more. I now feel confident in myself,

and I hope that I can keep up with my classes so that I can reach my goals.

ELEVEN

Learning means the world to me, because when you can't read it's hard to understand what newspaper and books got to offer.

I know when I learn to read that door will open for me. I can go to school and better myself. It will be nice to read my sons a story and help them with their reading.

TWELVE

My biggest fear is having people ask me to read anything. But by me learning how to read, I will be able to get rid of my fear. Reading a book will open the world to me and help me overcome fear.

As a young boy, seeing people reading the newspaper would make me envy them. Reading will show me a way to know me better, or see me in a better way. There are people like me who need to read, but they never learned to, the difference is, you have to want to learn.

I had to learn to ask for help in many ways in my life. I am able to see things that you can't. I see the world in a different way every day. I am my biggest enemy.

THIRTEEN

Learning to read is one of the skills you'll need to advance not only your mind, but your other motor skills and other areas of your brain. For instance, checkbook, or bills, finding out the right kind of foods to buy, not only cans but bags as well. Learning to read is important to you as a person if you would like to know what's going on in the world around us. Reading is having the knowledge to open your mind to learning everything on this planet, to develop other abilities in your mind, to tone yourself up, as well as tone up your personality and lifestyle. It's just one of the many doors you open for yourself. You can feel really good about reading. I mean, just think that once you have this skill, you can work with it to create and mold your life to become that helpful ingredient, to contribute something to mankind if you wish. Reading is very important, it's what molds the minds of leaders and politicians, the most important people of our nation. Reading is a part of life and a helpful tool in sustaining our nation. Without the ability to read, there would be no understanding and without understanding, there would be no strong and wise leadership for this nation.

FOURTEEN

To learn to read would mean that I can sit down and read a story and know what they are talking about and not have to ask anyone what a word is or how to say it. I can fill out a job application by myself now without too much difficulty, and read a menu all by myself and order what I want without asking someone else what the special of the day is.

As far back as I can remember, I have struggled to read. It started when I was a third grader in Paxton, Nebraska grade school and they noticed I was having trouble reading. They didn't really do too

much about it at first. They thought I was just clowning around until I reached the fifth grade and still could hardly read. They sent me to special education. When they got done running all or their tests they found out I could hardly read a Dick and Jane book. For the next three years I went to special education classes and was improving really good. My teacher told me if I kept it up I would be back in my friends' grade taking classes with them. That made me feel real good so I studied as hard as I could. It was the end on my eighth grade year and we moved to Champion, Nebraska. They had no classes in special education so when I was in ninth grade at Impirical High School, I started flunking again and was doing read bad but they were still passing me, so when I was in the twelfth grade I dropped out of school. My mom was real upset with me. She said I needed a high school diploma to get a job. I went job hunting and sure enough, that's what almost everyone said except for Sweeden Cream. I got a job working for them at $2.50 an hour waiting on customers. I got to know my boss real well and he was talking to mom and said he would work me around school if I would go back and after I graduated I would be the night time manager. I went back to school, got my diploma and became the manager of the Sweeden Cream.

Mom left Impirical and came out here to Las Vegas to visit some friends and found out about your school (UNLV Adult Literacy Program) and classes you had and said "Let's live out here a year and see if I can make it and then we will all move out here and I could go to school and get all the help I needed," as you can tell by my writing. We all moved out here and I have a real nice job working for Ridge View Enterprize Company. They let me leave every Thursday to go to my classes and when I finish the classes I would like to go to college and become a teacher, to teach all the other people out there that need help.

FIFTEEN

One year ago, my answer would have been, "I think everyone should read more!" You see, I didn't realize the meaning of "reading." I've been surface reading all of my life. I call it surface, because as far back as I can remember, I wasn't understanding what was going on in my world. Things would be explained to me at home, school or just out in the world and I couldn't understand the way others appeared to comprehend. The word couldn't might mean that I was too lazy or perhaps I didn't choose a role model that strived for completion or we can label me with a form of learning disability. Whatever the reason, the fact is my ability to read and understand one year ago was equivalent to the third grade level, at the age of forty-six!

Information which I had taken as fact through the years had to be evaluated as to the merit and the real truth of this information. See, for me, I didn't know or realize that there were answers other than what I was receiving all the time. My mind wasn't open to seek any other truths. For the people who read and understood from their beginning, would find it difficult to understand that my brain does not properly sort information. Just like my teachers who acted frustrated with me because they thought I was goofing off when I was actually totally confused and afraid. I had learned for my own peace of mind to cover fear because I didn't know how to express it. I was taught that expressing emotions wasn't the way a young man acted.

To reach a gestalt in my life is where I'm heading. Being able to reach out through reading and understanding and forming a sense of completeness and wholeness is my goal. For anyone who hasn't been at this lonely state of body and mind will never understand. The ability to read releases a handicap I have carried and buried a little each day.

I want to clarify once more that I don't need the "poor me" support or to blame myself for my reading skill. Not knowing and the choosing of

the easier, softer way lead me to the bottom of emptiness. It was only that my ego was overpowered enough to let a small amount of desire backed by action to see a small ray of light in and allowing a one hundred-eighty degree turn in my life! Values, slowly but surely, had to be undressed. Knowledge of power, privilege, and property were at the top on my list for reassessment. Morals and principles, once at the bottom were in need of higher priority. The changes didn't happen in one day, nor could I expect the truths to implant overnight. It takes what it takes to face the learning that I missed and know that it just takes work! The reasons for the void in this area until now, I may never know, the importance is the reality of the now. Thank god for the opportunity.

SIXTEEN

I think it's important to learn to read so that I can read something and understand it, be able to read aloud, not lose my concentration on what I'm reading, and to enjoy whatever I am reading. If I can learn to write and use punctuation better, then possibly I can write better so that people can understand my writing easier. I think reading will help me in getting a good education. I think personally, that if I was injured again in an accident, if I was not able to do the work that I am doing, then I would go back to school and get my high school education. Then I could go to college and get the knowledge for another job. I didn't get injured that badly, however, tho I did work on my education while I was laid up. Even tho I am better now, I am still going to get my education, because I might still need it down the road. I still have a long life ahead of me. I need reading not just for my education, but for my enjoyment, and for everyday life.

WHY I CAME TO THIS SCHOOL

ONE

The reason why I came to this school is because I needed to learn how to do math. My teacher is willing to help me in problems that I need help with.

I am enjoying the school alot the teachers there are very nice in they are alots of help to me to recite my homework.

TWO

Why I decided to come to AOIP Educational REVIEW Class:

First to take pictures of everybody. Pictures tells a lot about everybody. Because I need people to talk too and learn about what I'm doing right and wrong. Right now, I have to drop out of school program, To find a job. I need to learn to spell better, talk better and plainer and slower. Just being around women make me a better man. I want to know all about everything.

I never had real time to go to school and learn. I had to learn every thing the hard way. Like getting 2 DUI's Drinking and Driving. Getting fine $1,558. Getting seven tickets, spending 7 weeks in North Las Vegas jail house 1st time in life in jail.

Too be continous at a later date when I have a job and peace of mind.

THREE

Why I came to this class. I want to learn how to read and write. I also want to learn how to do math and learn how to spell correctly.

CATCHING UP WITH A LOST DESIRE

School days were very pleasant despite my shyness. Good report card ratings halted when I was transferred in the fourth grade to the, "Open-Air Class." Because of a physical condition, I remained here for two (2) years.

Open-Air Class was designed for students who would benefit by sitting and resting in a room with the windows wide open for fresh air. We each wore green one-piece heavy suits with an attached hood. We drank milk and delighted in graham crackers more than once a day. Each afternoon we rested on assigned cots made of canvas. There was more concentration on arts and crafts instead of general subjects. This program was approved by the New York City Board of Education, Borough of Brooklyn.

Entering Junior High School in the seventh grade was traumatic because I had to make up for lost time. Finally, graduated in the ninth grade, but it was a struggle!

Music appreciation was a favorite subject. During assembly class, I was selected to sing with the choir. As a result of this God-given talent, my popularity grew. I graduated happily. However, my parents were disappointed when I decided to pursue a theatrical career instead of attending High School. In those days, a two-year course was permitted at the Corlears Business School, N.Y.C.

After graduation, I possessed wonderful skills in the commercial field, but the drive to entertain precipitated. Many years later, I yearned for an academic education and eventually, attained a G.E.D. certification and a few college credits. Still today, there is a void in my life and I'll never have the pleasure of returning to class re-union, or root for the school's athletic teams, etc.

Now that I am a retired senior citizen, and a grandmother, every cherished moment of study is a desire fulfilled.

WILLING TO LEARN

I am a person who loves a challenge, that is one of the reason I came to AOIP. My experience at this school is great, I get to check myself and see what I need, to study most, therefore I have found that my spelling is off sometimes. My whole education needed to be brought up to date, all of my reading is the best of all my studies. Our teachers are the best, I have not seen teachers like this since I was in Elementary School, when we had only one teacher in a school. Good teachers have lots of compassion with the students. We have a wonderful group all working together. I review myself now often to see how much I have forget then it begins to come back to me. I like to write short stories, poems, plays and sometime jokes. I enjoy being in class every week. I know this class will help me pass the test, I have coming next month I will always try to do the things that I can and striving to do better all the time. I teach Sunday School, Counselor for your women, small children or who ever needs it.

What Works for My Students

ONE

Every person can learn. Eleven years of teaching elementary school and now adult literacy has made me believe this. Every individual has a unique learning style of their own. I have made a commitment to finding teaching methods which fit each individual student. Phonetic structure is the outline of skills to be taught, while the actual teaching and learning experience varies to include sounding out words, learning whole words by sight, and approaching reading as a total experience where words symbolize the meaning of the image an author is trying to convey. Reading, writing, and spelling can be used together to create ways for a person to express their own inner world of images. Discovering the literary world where one can actually share experience with authors while exploring our abilities to communicate through words, is exciting and exhilarating to my students and myself.

TWO

Community College Tutorial Service

At the Las Vegas Highland Square Reading Center, literacy students are looking to Virginia Griffin for guidance.

Using the Laubach way to reading, I find that what works for my students in the beginning, is teaching them to have self-confidence. As their confidence builds, they are able to go deeper into the learning process. I encourage and teach them to read the newspaper and

articles or editorials that they are personally interested in, such as the sports page or the society section.

Sometimes I just have spelling contests with them and I find this is a great opportunity for teaching syllables and vowels and consonants.

As I gradually get to know each individual student, I try to discern what areas they need help in at home or work. As an example, helping a student to read and learn the Nevada Driving Handbook in order to obtain a drivers license; also, the process of voting in a local election if they express a need in this area. In general, I work with them to increase their knowledge in such a way that they can realize a practical application in their daily living.

I want to help my students toward their goal in life. I have seen such satisfying and successful results with a student when they have finally achieved his or her aim in life.

My Most Funny, or Most Moving, Tutoring Experience

ONE

I was moved to tears one evening when my student, a middle-aged Philippino lady, revealed to me that she had no friends because she was afraid someone would discover that she could not read.

She is a very intelligent woman. Although English is not her native language she has always worked for a living in this country. Recently, she was employed as a keyboard examiner for a large electronic company. The job requires skill and memory. She is nice, humorous and has much to offer.

I am a middle-aged housewife and mother with the empty nest syndrome. I have always loved to read and enjoy tutoring, but have not been employed outside my home for 30 years. And really have no other skills.

I am lonely and embarrassed for the opposite reason of this courageous woman. In today's world, a homemaker is almost extinct and either laughed at or looked down on. I also hide from people for fear they will find out and think I'm useless even though I've raised 6 children and am not through yet.

It's a funny world. I'm helping her and she is helping me . . . more than she knows.

TWO

I am a tutor with the CALL program and we use a technique of goal setting combined with the Language Experience approach to assist non-readers in advancing their reading abilities. The student is given the opportunity to relate to the tutor their life experiences, interests and

aspirations. Goal setting and language experience dictation and writing releases the students to express themselves and encourages/motivates the students to move forward in personal vision. The students are able to solidify their direction in a specific aspect of life as they are requested to consider and relate matters of concern to them.

One of my students has related to me very intense feelings and concerns for the plight of single parent women heads of households and too her concern about the Child Care dilemma for low-income single women. She perceives the great need for greater public awareness and social reform. We were writing an article to express her ideas and release her passions. Our ultimate goal was to share the article with others with like experiences and inform the public of the social dilemma with the hope to effect a change via public out-cry.

Recently my student was given the opportunity to give a testimonial on her experiences. I was able to assist her in writing her testimony. The fulfillment of this high priority personal goal was a major satisfaction for us both and the most exciting experience for me as a tutor.

This testimonial will be heard by those who have the ability to effect a change on the policy and lives of others. We are well pleased.

1-800-445-9673

Nevada Literacy Coalition

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